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Timber Tales

No. 131 News and Ideas for Forest Landowners from Ricky Kilpatrick, Area Forestry Agent 1st Quarter 2010

A Graduate Student's Quest to Better Understand Louisiana's White-tailed Deer¹

For the past two years, RNR graduate student Justin Thayer has been trapping, tagging and chasing white-tailed deer in West Baton Rouge Parish. This project began in 2006 when Scott Durham, Deer Program Leader for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and RNR professor Dr. Michael Chamberlain decided it was time to find out more about Louisiana's white-tailed deer populations.

Surprisingly, baseline studies describing basic deer population characteristics, such as harvest and survival rates and home range information, are lacking or outdated. Because deer hunting in Louisiana contributes more than \$340 million dollars annually to the state's economy, sound research is essential to insure proper management. Thus, the study was designed to determine deer harvest rates, survival estimates and home ranges sizes of white-tailed deer in Louisiana.

Justin, with the help of RNR student workers and volunteers, has radio-marked and tracked deer in West Baton Rouge Parish over the past two years on bottomland hardwood forests. Forest management in this area utilizes deer-friendly timber practices, which have resulted in some of the state's highest deer densities.

Captured deer range from 30-pound fawns to 200+ pound bucks. A total of 48 deer have been radio-marked (37 bucks and 11 does) to measure movement patterns and home range sizes. In the first study year, 24 deer were radio-marked, but one doe died, two bucks lost collars and nine deer were harvested by hunters (six bucks, three does). Each harvested deer was measured, aged and photographed.

For additional information, call Area Code 318 and . . .

BIENVILLE	263-7400	BOSSIER	965-2326	CADDO	226-6805
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¹ From School of Renewable Natural Resources magazine, Fall 2008, page 5.

Preliminary results from these harvested deer suggest smaller home ranges than those reported in similar studies in other southern states. These deer have annual home ranges of 155-418 acres for bucks and 60-70 acres for does. Even more impressive were the home range areas of concentrated use or core area (where 50% of the radio locations were recorded), which averaged 34 acres for bucks and 12 acres for does. Although these results are preliminary and only from a small sample of radio-marked deer, observations from nearly two years of ongoing telemetry suggest similar results in most of the other radio-marked deer.

Preliminary findings highlighting small home ranges may indicate the importance of habitat quality to deer in southern, bottomland hardwood forests. Interest in the study among managers and hunters has been intense. Hunters want to know how much land is needed to effectively manage or “hold” a buck. Managers are more interested in knowing deer survival rates. Final study results should help hunters and managers better understand deer habits.

Season of Importance of Wildlife Food Plants²

Wildlife needs food year round. For that reason, it is important to have a diversity of vegetation to provide a food source throughout the year. Diversity is also important as some years certain species of plants will have low mast production. The following table lists several species that are important food sources by their season of availability.

Spring

Wild plum (Prunus species), red maple (Acer rubrum), squawroot (Conophilus americana), winged elm (Ulmus alata), poplar (Populus species), mushrooms and other fungi (e.g., Amanita, Clavaria), blackberry (Rubus species), black cherry (Prunus serotina), mulberry (Morus rubra), native grasses (e.g., Andropogon, Panicum, and Paspalum species)

Summer

Hawthorn (Crataegus species), saw palmetto (Serenoa repens), blueberry (Vaccinium species), pokeweed (Phytolacca americana), pine (Pinus species), mushrooms and other fungi, blackberry, grape (Vitis species), holly, gallberry (Ilex species), native grasses (e.g., Panicum, and Paspalum species), greenbriar (Smilax species)

Fall

Oak (Quercus species), dogwood (Cornus floridana), beech (Fagus species), hickory (Carya species), pine, blackgum (Nyssa sylvatica), magnolia (Magnolia grandiflora), grape, holly, gallberry, native grasses (e.g., Panicum and Paspalum species) greenbriar, legumes (Cassia and Desmodium spp.)

Winter

Oak, black walnut (Juglans nigra), beech, hickory, poplar, blackgum, sumac (Rhus coppalina), cherry laurel (Prunus caroliniana), holly, gallberry, waxmyrtle (Myrica cerifera), greenbriar

²Table from Making the Most of Your Mast byCarolym M. Sekerak and George W. Tanner. Publication SS-FOR-3 by the University of Florida, 1994.

Common Forest Trees and Their Relative Wildlife Food Value

Tree	Squirrel		Deer		Turkey Fruit	Quail Fruit
	Fruit	Buds	Browse	Fruit		
Oak (Groups)						
White	H	M	L	H	H	H
Red	H	M	L	H	H	H
Water (Pin)	H	M	M	H	H	H
Hickory	H	....	L	....	....	....
Pecan (Sweet)	H	....	L	M	....	....
eech	H	....	M	....	H	H
Gum						
Black	H	....	M	H	H	....
Tupelo	H	....	M	H	....	....
Magnolia	M	....	M	....	M	M
Sweetbay	M	....	H	....	M	M
Ash	M	....	M	....	M	M
Elm	L	M	L	....	L	L
Hackberry	M	....	L	....	L	L
Yellow Poplar	L	....	M	....	....	L
Cottonwood	....	....	L	....	....	....
Willow	....	M	M	....	....	....
Black Cherry	M	....	M	....	M	M
Mulberry – Red	M	....	H	....	H	H
Locust	H	....	M	M	H	H
Dogwood – Flower	M	....	M	....	H	M
Maple	M	M	M	....	M	M
Sycamore	M	....	L	....	....	....
Pine	M	....	L	....	M	H
Cypress	M	....	M	....	L	....

H - High Use, L - Low Use, M - Medium Use Information lacking or not used

The following shrubs and vines are valuable to wildlife: yaupon, gallberry, huckleberry, blackberry, crabapple, haw, arrow wood, titi, wild azalea, silverbell, sumac, French mulberry, sweetleaf, deciduous holly, smilax (greenbrier or sawbrier), vine honeysuckle, rattan, yellow Jessamine, grapes, muscadine, and buckvine.

Bugs, Bugs and More Bugs

Here’s an update from Dr. Dale Pollet on some insect situations in the state.

1. The most-asked question these days is how many bugs did the cold weather kill? The answer is very, very few. Most insects are very capable of protecting themselves by hibernating or finding protected areas, and some even have ethylene glycol – anti freeze – in their systems. Some that were exposed by cultivation or removing their cover were killed, but the rest are alive and well.
2. Aphids – These little pests are already active, especially on daylilies. Check your plants, and you’ll find in many cases heavy populations feeding and growing in the whorls. If you do nothing, they can stunt development and shorten bloom time this season. Heavy infestations can cause some streaking in the foliage. Treatment with a systemic insecticide will help to eliminate these populations and allow your plants to grow and bloom normally.

3. Crane flies – These flies – they’re not giant mosquitoes – are beginning to emerge. These large, slender flies have long legs and are very delicate. They develop in the soil, feeding on organic matter in the late winter and spring. In the pupal stage they work their way to the top of the soil and emerge. The pupal cases are sometimes called leather jackets because they have a leathery appearance. These flies are harmless, but they can be a big nuisance when large populations emerge and collect around lights at night, coming inside when doors are opened. Removing lawn thatch will help to reduce populations, and changing outdoor lights to yellow will reduce their attraction, thus reducing the populations around doors.
4. Cold damage – Many of our woody plants and trees that started to bud and grow with the warm temperatures may have been injured by the few nights of cold weather. This will be a big attraction for a complex of little beetles called shot hole borers. These beetles are attracted to this damaged tissue and will bore into the terminals and cause additional damage to the plants. Pruning out the dead tissue and treating with Thionex or a pyrethroid will help prevent further injury. It would be more effective if an oil, such as ultra fine oil, is added to the spray and the pH is checked before the insecticide is added to the water.
5. Wasps and ladybeetles – Both of these insects have a bad habit of overwintering in the walls and attics of our homes and buildings. At this time of year when the weather warms, these insects begin to emerge from these resting places. The problem is they cannot find the openings they entered through and will come out at any light source. Many times those light sources are the lights in our homes. These insects will come out of light fixtures and wall outlets and switches. The wasps can be a problem because they will sting, and the Asian ladybeetle, if mashed, will defecate on walls or cloth material and cause staining. These insects are attracted to the lights and can often be found at the windows trying to get outside. The vacuum cleaner is the best way to collect them -- be sure to get rid of the bag or close it off or they will crawl back down the hose to get out. To prevent them from being a nuisance next year, you need to closely examine the outside of your home and seal off cracks or opening that have allowed them to enter. These same openings could provide entrance for swarming honeybees or yellow jackets searching for a site to build a colony or nest to create other problems for you.
6. Silverfish/firebrats – These teardrop-shaped silver or pepper-spotted insects are very prominent in homes these cold days. They, like the firebrat, like hot, dry environments of the attic, but the cold weather is driving them down into the warmth of the house. They are starch feeders and can get into foods as well as books and eat the glue and paper. Treatments with pyrethroids will control these pests. They do not bite, but finding them in your dinner plates and bowls or in the sink or bathtub is not exciting. When treating, be sure to get sprays into the cracks and crevices for better management.

BCAP Suspended; 60-day Comment Period on New Rules Begins³

Effective immediately, the Biomass Crop Assistance Program is on hold in all states. Local FSA offices will no longer accept new applications for Collection, Harvest, Storage and Transportation (CHST) matching payments.

The USDA proposed new rules for the program on February 4. A 60-day comment period follows the announcement. After the comment period, the USDA will develop a more final set of implementation standards. Once these rules are announced, applications for the program will once again be accepted. For applications received prior to the suspension of the program, payments will continue through March 31.

The new rules highlight the fact that the 2009 implementation—based on the Notice of Funds Availability—was a sort of rapid prototyping. It allowed the USDA to get a small version of the program up and running so it could evaluate the effects of the program on markets, the total cost of the program, and whether the program accomplished its goals. It appears the process was successful.

³ From *Forest2Fuel* Special Edition newsletter, February 8, 2010.

Proposed New Rules

The most significant proposed change is to the amount of the payments themselves. In the original rules, suppliers to any facility that produced electricity either for sale to the grid or for its own use were eligible for a dollar for dollar matching payment, up to \$45/ton, for every dry ton of delivered eligible material. The new rules recognize that this payment amount would make the program cost prohibitive—an estimated \$2.1 billion in 2010 alone.

The new rules offer three options for structuring payments.

1. A dollar for dollar per bone dry ton (BDT) matching payment EXCEPT for suppliers of facilities converting wood wastes and residues into heat or electricity for their own use. Suppliers to these facilities would receive dollar for dollar matching payments on eligible materials used to produce heat or electricity ABOVE the facilities historic baseline. This payment structure would incent the idea of "additionality," driving more renewable energy production rather than rewarding those who have been producing renewable energy for years, sometimes decades.
2. A tiered approach where suppliers to biofuels facilities would receive the dollar for dollar per BDT matching payment, not to exceed \$45/BDT. Suppliers to facilities producing heat, power, renewable energy or biobased products would receive a lesser amount, roughly \$16 per BDT or an amount based on the value of lower carbon emissions. This payment structure would incent biofuels production over other types of renewable energy.
3. A dollar for dollar per BDT matching payment for all facilities based on production above an historic baseline. The full payment, up to \$45/BDT, would go to new facilities and facilities like schools, and public buildings that convert from fossil fuel use to renewable biomass, for eligible materials showing exceptional promise and innovation, and for consumption above a baseline. Payments would be reduced for facilities that do not increase production over their historic levels. This structure would also incent additionality, but it would also provide some level of payment to those who have historically produced their own heat and electricity from biomass.

In our last issue (*Forest2Fuel*), we described the advocacy efforts of the Composite Panel Association (CPA) to remove from the eligible materials list the mill residues used by composite panel makers. While the new rules are not final, it appears efforts by the CPA have been successful. The proposed new rule precludes payments for mill wastes and residues already used for the production of higher value products.

Other rule changes are likely to get less feedback:

- Originally, suppliers were eligible for matching payments for up to two years after they filed their first application; under the new rules, the two-year clock starts ticking when suppliers receive their first payment.
- The original rule called for measuring the moisture content of each load of biomass; the new rule accepts industry standards for measuring moisture content, including random sampling and the use of historical statistical data.
- The proposed rules slightly modify the requirement for "arms-length transactions." The program still precludes payments for "related-party transactions" but allows facility stockholders or cooperative members to participate.
- The original rules required that forest biomass be harvested in accordance with a forest stewardship plan. The proposed rule has expanded the types of plans acceptable to include the American Tree Farm Program, the Sustainable Forestry Initiatives Program and State Best Management Practices Programs.

With a proposed cost of \$2.1 billion per year, pausing the program to ensure the government gets it right will be welcome news to many. And for those who will be adversely affected by the new rules, the comment period is critical. The CPA has demonstrated that the USDA is willing to listen and act when an entire industry is being disadvantaged.

We think it unlikely that new applications for payments will be accepted before June, a potential disadvantage to suppliers who have already received their first payments and have set the two-year clock in motion. If you are in this category, we recommend you take advantage of the comment period and provide feedback asking for the 2-year period be suspended as long as new applications are not being accepted.

The most robust feedback, however, is likely to come from the restructuring of the payments.

Biomass Crop Assistance Establishment Cost and Annual Payment Program

The proposed rules released by the USDA on February 4 also include the draft guidelines describing the biomass crop establishment and annual payment program. All page references are to the 104-page [Proposed Rules](#) on the USDA's website.

Eligible Crops (pages 36-37):

Except for invasive and noxious species and crops covered under Title I of the 2008 Farm Bill, all renewable plant materials, including plants and trees, are considered eligible crops. No further detail is available at this time.

Eligible Lands (pages 40-43):

Both agricultural land and non-industrial private forest lands are eligible. Non-industrial private forest land is defined as rural land with existing tree cover owned by a private individuals and groups, but excludes ownership by corporations whose stocks are publicly traded or those engaged in the production of wood products. Lands must be in a project area to be eligible.

Project Areas (pages 31-37):

Just as biomass conversion facilities and suppliers must be qualified before suppliers are eligible for matching payments, eligibility for establishment and annual payments is determined by whether the crop is produced in a project area. To achieve approved project area status, a project sponsor (either a group of producers or a biomass conversion facility) must complete an application that is then reviewed and approved by the USDA.

Payments (pages 43-46):

The USDA will provide a payment of up to 75 percent of the cost of establishing perennial, not annual, crops. The costs include the costs of seed, stock and planting on agricultural lands and site preparation and seedlings on forest lands. Supplemental and temporary irrigation will also be covered.

In order to receive the payments, producers must have already planted the crop or forest and presented their receipts to their county FSA offices.

Annual payments will be calculated on a per acre basis and are intended to retain or incent participation within a given project area. They will be based on market rental rates, with additions for innovative and exceptional feedstocks and reductions for any CHST payment made when the material is delivered to the agreed upon biomass conversion facility.

Producers will be eligible for annual payments for up to 5 years for annual and non-woody perennial crops and up to 15 years for woody perennial crops.

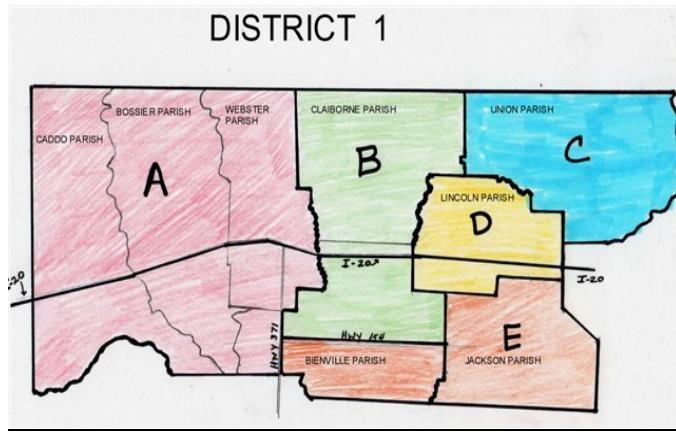
Total Program Costs:

The total cost of the establishment and annual payment program is \$536 million per year—\$306 million for establishments costs, \$219 for annual payments, and \$11 million for technical assistance to program participants.

This brief overview represents the first set of rules announced for this second part of the Biomass Crop Assistance Program. Because this part of the program resembles the type of agricultural program that the USDA has extensive experience designing and implementing, we expect fewer issues to arise. The 60-day comment period applies to these proposed rules as well, so we expect feedback will help the USDA solidify the structure of the program to ensure it accomplishes its goals.

New Districts for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF)

The new LDAF districts for northwest Louisiana include District 1 which is still housed in Haughton. The district forester is Dena Ginn and the phone number is (318) 949-3225.



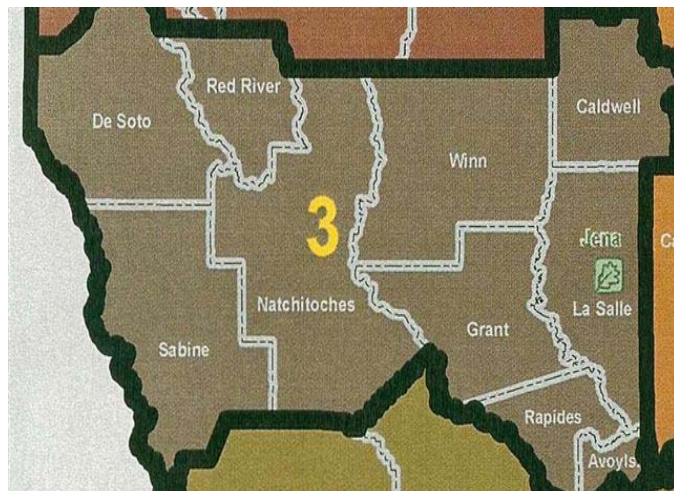
MANAGEMENT FORESTERS

- AREA A – Justin Whittington (318) 965-9380
Troy Turner (318) 949-3225
- AREA B – Jeff Bass (318) 927-3441
- AREA C – Trent Tuma (318) 368-3730
- AREA D – Dwayne Ellerman (318) 768-4472
- AREA E – Jemery Lamkin (318) 249-4514

FIRE FORESTERS

- Allen Gayle – Area South of I-20
(318) 371-3007 or (318) 949-3225
- Jeff Anders – Area North of I-20
(371-3007 or (318) 949-3225

The District 3 office is in Jena. Robert Lamb is the district forester and the phone number is (318) 992-1400. Parish foresters in the western part of District 3 are as follows:



- Red River, DeSoto
Jason Mosely (318) 932-1063 or (318) 872-4991
- Natchitoches
Dan Armstrong (318) 357-3126
- Sabine
Ronnie Cole (318) 256-0615

LDAF Outreach 2010

In March 2010, the LDAF will host nine outreach sessions throughout Louisiana. The sessions are designed to inform the agricultural community, decision makers and the general public about LDAF's mission and responsibilities. The LDAF staff would like to meet you and hear your comments, questions and concerns. Based on your input, LDAF will be able to address pressing needs regarding agriculture and rural economic development in ways that will be beneficial for everyone. The outreach sessions will be held at nine different locations throughout the state:

- Monday, March 1 LDAF Monroe District Office, 6-8:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 3 LDAF Haughton District Office, 6-8:00 p.m.
- Monday, March 8 Welsh Community Center, 6-8:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 10 Peltier Park, Thibodaux, 6-8:00 p.m.
- Monday, March 15 Louisiana Emergency Shelter, Alexandria, 6-8:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 16 LDAF Hammond District Office, 6-8:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 17 Opelousas Civic Center/LDAF District Office, 6-8:00 p.m.
- Thursday, March 18 East Jefferson Library, Metairie, 6-8:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 19 LDAF Baton Rouge Office – Ag Day, 2-4:00 p.m.

Events, Thoughts and Tidbits

*** The Ark-La-Tex Forestry Forum is set for Thursday, March 11, 2010, at the Holiday Inn Financial Plaza. Register by March 8 for \$20! (See details on last page.)

*** Be sure to sweep any pine needles or leaves off from your roof. They can hold moisture on your shingles and cause them to rot!! I've had first-hand experience, as I stepped through my dad's roof one time where pine needles had stayed too long!!

*** For a listing of sawmills and other wood-using industries in your area, check out this great feature at the LSU Forest Products Development Center's website:

http://www2.lsuagcenter.com/forestryindustries_search/default.aspx.

*** If your area has a high deer density and you don't have a lot of food plot area, plant cowpeas. You can plant them as early as April all the way until mid-August. Seeding rates are 15 lbs/acre for drill planting and 25 lbs/acre for broadcast.

*** If you are planting or harvesting trees, remember you or your contractor needs to call Louisiana One Call first!!

***CONFERENCE – Wood-Based Biofuels, Biomass & Bioenergy: Opportunities and Challenges in Louisiana, Crown Plaza Baton Rouge, April 22-23, 2010. Conference web site: www.lfpdc.lsu.edu/woodbasedbiofuels/ and the registration web site: www.regonline.com/woodbasedbiofuels.

Sincerely,

Ricky Kilpatrick

Ricky Kilpatrick
Area Forestry Agent

RK:as

It is the policy of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability. If you have a disability which requires special assistance for your participation in a meeting, please contact the Bossier Parish Extension Office at (318) 965-2326 three days prior to the meeting.

**26TH ANNUAL ARK-LA-TEX FORESTRY FORUM
THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2010
8:30 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.**

**HOLIDAY INN FINANCIAL PLAZA
5555 FINANCIAL PLAZA
SHREVEPORT, LA**

The program is currently being planned and speakers are being contacted. Planned topics include:

- Tax Issues
- Landowners and Water and Wells
- Regional Forestry News
- National Prospective of the Timber Market
- Surviving the Wood Products Depression

Door prizes will be given by several exhibitors.

Come and enjoy an excellent forestry meeting, great lunch and the fellowship of others interested in forestry. If you pre-register by March 8th, the fee is \$20. After that date or at the door, registration will be \$25. Your fee includes lunch and a copy of program proceedings.

**ARK-LA-TEX FORESTRY FORUM
MARCH 11, 2010**

Name _____ Phone _____

Company/Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

This form may be duplicated. If more than one person shall be registered, please include names and addresses of the additional people.

_____ Number of people registered @ \$20 per person (\$25 after March 8th)

_____ Amount enclosed

Make check payable and mail to: **ARK-LA-TEX FORESTRY FORUM
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Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Red River and Webster Parishes**

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, Dr. William B. Richardson, Chancellor
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Dr. Paul Coreil, Vice Chancellor and Director
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